Abstract Session

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Purpose of an Abstract

• “The abstract is a succinct, single-paragraph summary of your paper’s purpose, main points, methods, findings, and conclusions, and is often recommended to be written after the rest of your paper has been completed.” (Writing Commons)
Purpose of an Abstract

• Think of an abstract less as a summary and more as a preview or glimpse
  • Researchers want to know if your paper is relevant to their work.
  • Abstracts act as timesavers in determining the paper’s connection the researcher’s aims.
  • Brevity and clarity are thus two main elements that an abstract should employ.
Abstract Components

- Definitely contains:
  - Research topic
  - Research questions
  - Participants
  - Methods
  - Results
  - Data analysis
  - Conclusions

- Can contain:
  - Possible implications of research
  - Future work potentially conducted from findings
  - Keywords from paper
Abstract Components

- Purpose of your research
  - Put simply, the problem the paper addresses
  - Brief background of the importance
  - Impact the paper may have if successful
- Methods
  - Explanation of processes and procedures
  - Important variables
  - If you did not complete a study, what did you do?
Abstract Components

• Results
  • Plainly state the answer to your research question(s)
  • Vague results can lead to misinterpretation
  • Remember: the reader wants to know the relevance your paper has to their work; tell them clearly

• Conclusions and recommendations
  • State the implications of your findings
  • What did you learn?
  • The impact your results will have on a particular field
Language and Usage

• Use keywords found throughout your paper
  • You may include a section for keywords after your main paragraph. On the line following this section, type “Keywords:” in italics, then type the keywords in regular font with commas between each.

• Use abbreviations only after defining them
  • Write out Body Mass Index (BMI) in parentheses, then you may use BMI for the remainder of the abstract.

• Write in active voice
  • Be clear about who did what.
  • Engage your reader.
Abstract Writing Tips

• Observe any special formatting rules in the application
  • Content sections, word count, etc.
• Read examples from other sources
• Determine the level of expertise of your audience
• Convey only essential information (abstract max. word counts are typically 150-250 words)
Abstract Revision

• Answer the following questions to determine how well you observed each:
  • What was the purpose/importance of your research?
  • What problem did you address? What was the scope of the project?
  • How did you attempt to solve the problem?
  • What significant data was found?
  • What new ideas (or problems) emerged from your research? How does this research add to the knowledge of this topic?
Abstracts for Non-Existent Papers

- Sometimes you want to apply for a particular conference, but have not written a paper that fits its theme/interests/etc.
- Abstract deadline is too close for you to complete research project.
- Hypothesize results, implications, relevance to field.
Need Someone to Review Your Abstract?

- Please come make an appointment with the CAP office writing assistant, Eliza Killey-Wolfs.
- Availability and Grades: First link here: https://www.unthsc.edu/students/center-for-academic-performance/
- Writing assistant email: eliza.killey-wolfs@unthsc.edu
Abstract Challenge

Using the following information, write an abstract for the paper described:

- Study determined that delayed gratification results extends to social media communication; adolescents were unable to refrain from reading and responding to messages received even with the promise of more messages.
- Question for research: does the delayed gratification test (commonly referred to as the Stanford “Marshmallow Test”) extend to human ability to delay response time to messages received through various social media platforms?
- Subjects used: adolescents ages 10-16
- Methodologies: subjects received messages on various platforms (Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram) and were told that they would receive more messages if they were able to refrain from reading and responding to already received messages.
- Limitations: geographical region; variety of demographics of adolescents; number of subjects (100); limited age range.
- Research could allow further studies on why adolescents are quick to read and respond to messages on social media; whether research extends to older populations; whether research varies across geographical and demographic limitations.
Next Steps

- RAD Abstract Submissions due February 22
- Posters and Prep Session
  - February 26, March 6 12:00-12:45
  - Lunch provided by Gibson D. Lewis Health Science Library
- Presentation Practice with Toastmasters
  - March 27 & 29, times TBD
References

APA formatting and style guide. *Purdue OWL.* https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/


Taylor, Ben. Abstract session. UNTHSC presentation.

Vinson, Shelby. Writing an abstract. UNTHSC Presentation.